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RUMIAAA/USCINCSO MIAMI FL//SCJ3/SCJ33/SCJ34/SOCSO LNO//

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SIPDIS

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FOR WHA/BSC
NAIROBI FOR MICHAEL FITZPATRICK
SOUTHCOM FOR POLAD BARBARA MORE
NSC FOR SUE CRONIN
TREASURY FOR A/S O'BRIEN
TREASURY FOR OTA WARFIELD, VAN KOCH, MILLAR

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: PARAGUAY DELIVERS ON U.S. REQUEST FOR TRADE DATA
CRITICAL TO CREATION OF TTU

REF: ASUNCION 274

11. During his March 8 meeting with Vice-President Castiglioni, Treasury A/S O'Brien requested the VP's assistance in acquiring trade data from Customs. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency (ICE) needs this data to facilitate creation of its Trade and Transparency Unit (TTU) with Paraguay. On March 10, the Ambassador met with Customs Director Margarita Diaz de Vivar making the same request.

12. On March 16, Paraguay delivered container-level trade data on contents and valuation extending from 2003 through February 2006. We understand ICE plans to format this data and, in turn, provide Paraguay with similar associated U.S. trade data. The important next step will be for Paraguay to create the unit to analyze the data. Paraguay's cooperation in sharing this data and creating a TTU will facilitate the joint investigation of criminal and/or terrorist organizations misusing trade between our two countries.

13. Next steps for the creation of the TTU include identifying approximately seven persons to staff the unit, identifying office space for the group, purchasing computers on which will be loaded sophisticated data mining software, and finally providing training for the unit. The first two steps are the responsibility of the GOP. ICE will provide post with a fund cite drawing on INL funds for the purchase of the computers, and will eventually provide training as well, using the same funds.

14. Once the TTU is established, there should be regular, two-way exchanges of data to keep the database as current as possible, although at best, the data will have about a two-month lag from real time. In previous discussions with Paraguayan Customs (in which Emboffs, Treasury OTA advisors and ICE personnel have participated) the Director of Customs has agreed to USG stipulations that the TTU should be staffed only with personnel who have passed polygraph examinations, and should be attached to the new Customs Investigation and Intelligence Unit that was created in October and staffed with OTA-trained and vetted personnel, and which will receive assistance under the MCC Threshold Program.

¶54. Post has suggested that the GOP staff the TTU in a task force fashion, drawing on already vetted personnel from other units such as the IPR-related UTE unit, the financial intelligence unit, and the tax investigative unit. A task force approach will mitigate likely problems finding enough trustworthy and competent people from within Customs and also increase the level of cooperation among the various units, improving their collective effectiveness. Post has already received specifications from ICE for the necessary computer equipment and will be obtaining local quotes to advance the procurement process. At the same time, post will continue to push for the official creation of the unit and the naming of personnel to staff it. The TTU could be operational in as soon as two months if we do not encounter excessive delays on the part of the GOP.

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